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Book Reviews

Authority in the Modern State. By *Harold J. Laski*. Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn. Pp. 389. \$3.00.

Mr. Laski, by his contributions to some of the best legal, historical, and general periodicals of the country and by his books, has swiftly won a high place among the younger writers on political science. He came to the United States from England via Canada less than a decade ago. Sponsored by Justices Holmes and Brandeis of the U. S. Supreme Court and given an academic position at Harvard, he never has had to fight for his status with editors and with publishers, as a man equally brilliant and erudite but friendless might have had to do. His Oxford training and his association with thinkers like Maitland, Ernest Barker, Graham Wallas, and the lamented Figgis, plus his wide reading in European literature—especially that of France—have given him ideals of style and form as well as of scholarship. Consequently he turns out much more readable books on mooted issues of contemporary statecraft than most Americans do who compete in the same field. Moreover, he has learned the wisdom of making what he has to say center naturally around historic persons rather than take the form of abstract discussion. Thus in this book three of the five chapters have to do with Bonald, Lammenais, and Royer-Collard.

A reader more quickly understands this author's output wherever it be found if he knows that Mr. Laski is a "pluralist" and pragmatist; that he is a foe of "the big State," of centralization of authority, and of undue subordination to the State of all societies which represent the natural religious, vocational, and other groupings of men. Naturally, therefore, he is a formidable critic of many contemporary tendencies. Thinking thus, he writes with felicity and insight on French syndicalism, British guild socialism, and all the many movements which indicate that industrial democracy is coming into being to challenge the older autocratic ideal of control in commerce and manufacturing; and this too at a time when there is a natural reaction against centralization of political power, born of the proof that Germany has given of what it means to carry the theory to its logical limit.

Democracy, Discipline, and Peace. By *William R. Thayer*. Houghton, Mifflin Co., Boston. Pp. 124. \$1.00, net.

This brochure includes lectures given by the author at Brown University on the Colver Foundation. His reputation as the biographer of Cavour and John Hay and as a respected historian of modern Italy has given weight to much that he has written from 1914 to date on phases of the war in Europe. That he has always been as judicious in his comments, as he is in this book, his best friends will not claim. Here he writes as a critic lacking in passion or hate. He stresses the necessity of democracy's training in will and conscience as well as in intelligence if it is to do all that the world expects from it as a definitive and final form of government. For him the democratic state is the highest form of organized society, because it allows fullest play for man's freedom of will. But as he passes from discussion of democracy to dwell on the theme of "Discipline," he is seen to be a meliorist, rather than a pessimist or an optimist. He believes in slow rather than swift passing from autocracy to democracy; and he much deprecates the fact that so many nations are now taking on socialistic forms of government before they are disciplined by the training that goes with republicanism and representative democracy. Lacking this training these premature experiments must fail. Mr. Thayer does not hesitate to pronounce the common-school system of the United States a sham as far as its training of pupils in moral discipline and character goes. Ergo, he would have universal military training for youth, and he would make English compulsory in all schools. On the whole the lectures strike us as an adventure on stilts without getting anywhere worth while.

Influence of the Great War Upon Shipping. By *J. Russell Smith*. New York. Oxford University Press, New York. Pp. 357.

This book by the professor of Geography and Industry, of the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, is No. 9 of

the Preliminary Economic Studies of the War edited by Professor Kinley, of the University of Illinois, for the Division of Economics and History of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Both for its inclusive array of facts, especially as to the recent expansion of the Merchant American Marine, and for its more theoretical and speculative portions dealing with the possible and desirable future of the fleets that have been built in American shipyards or taken over from Germany, this monograph deserves commendation, and also study by citizens and by lawmakers who at this session of Congress must make a decision of far-reaching importance on national shipping policy.

Professor Smith has not blinked any of the facts which lie on the surface, as well as those underneath it, which show how the inexperience of the nation cost it time, money, and failure to function during 1917-'18; and this at a time when the world's destiny seemed to hang on the speed with which ships could be turned out in American yards. Compared with the record of the navy with its expert naval architects and builders, the improvised "yards" run by civilians, at first "fell down" woefully, and with responsibility for the failure distributed between the Government officials who intervened and the business men who tried to improvise a technique overnight, as it were. Ultimately, as Professor Smith's monograph shows, order came out of chaos, team-work was achieved, employers and employees established a working concordat, and the national output of carriers came to be such that the burden previously borne largely by Great Britain as a transporter of troops and goods for the Allies, was shared by the United States.

British as well as American methods and experiences are described in this book, and there are valuable chapters on the world's organization of shipping, the effects of the war on marine insurance, trade dislocations during the war and "world shipping, world organization and world peace." In this last chapter the argument is that as the world has become one in trade, it must become one in government; that, "just as the thirteen States relinquished the possibility of exploiting each other through tariff, trade, and financial disagreement, so the nations of the world, if they would stop the exploitation of one regional group of people by another," so must the nations. Therefore, "we must unite in world-organization with a free sea permitting a great world trade, or start into an epoch of militarism with the menace of being united by some conqueror taking a rich world tribute." This is significant and heretical doctrine, as to "free trade," to come from Pennsylvania, the State of "high protectionism."

Foreign Financial Control in China. By *T. W. Overlach*. The Macmillan Company, New York City. Pp. 281. \$2.00.

The terms of the Peace Conference's settlement of the controversy between China and Japan over Germany's former "rights" and territory in the province of Shantung and the decision of the United States Government to encourage American financiers to enter into a "consortium" by which expansion of China's transportation system is to be fostered, make this a timely book. The method employed by the author is historical, and he has "documented" his case well. Naturally within the compass of a volume of only 281 pages he has not been able to dwell on all the contracts and agreements that have been entered into since the days of Great Britain's first invasion of the field. But he has explained the significance of the more important "understandings" down to 1917; and in a formidable array of foot-notes, and with an excellent bibliography, he has made it easy for any reader to do collateral reading.

The encouraging conclusion to which he comes, is that even prior to the war the financial world had begun to "consider the conception of nations as hostile competitors in world-finance as one economically unsound" and they were tending towards "elimination of competition and towards consolidation and substitution of pacific motives." He argues that the war will have increased this trend, and that therefore the "Chinese problem, which still ranks as the greatest capitalistic proposition of the near future" can and will be settled on the basis of international co-operation.